CLAIMS

1. Method for searching in documents stored in electronic memory, including the following steps:

   – selection of at least one document among the stored documents, from a query composed of at least one predetermined character string, then

   – extraction of a result in order to display it in the form of a preview of information related to the selected document, and

   – prior to the steps of selection and extraction, generation of a table representing the stored documents, containing a character string including at least a part of the information of the stored documents,

   wherin, during the selection step, one generates the result with the help of the representation table, from information contained in the character string in the representation table found relevant according to the query.

2. Method for searching information according to claim 1, wherein, one compares the predetermined character string in the query with the character string in the representation table, notably by scanning sequentially the representation table, to select at least one document among the stored documents.

3. Method for searching information according to claim 1 or 2, wherein, at least one document being of e-mail message type and comprising several distinct sections chosen among the set constituted by a sender address, a recipient address, a header, a message body, and at least an attachment, the character string in the representation table contains at least a part of the text type information of each section of the e-mail message type document.

4. Method for searching information according to claim 2 and 3, wherein for the document of type e-mail message, one scans sequentially the information concerning the attachment before the information concerning any of the other sections of the document

5. Method for searching information according to any of the claims from 1 to 4, wherein the representation table character string moreover contains, for each stored document, identification information of this document.

6. Method for searching information according to any of the claims from 1 to 5, wherein one stores in memory at least a part of the result of the information search.

7. Method for searching information according to any of the claims from 1 to 6, wherein the part of the result of the information search stored in memory is stored in a file able to contain results from several searches.

8. Method for searching information according to any of the claims from 1 to 7, including, during the result extraction step, the following steps::
   - extraction of the information contained in the character string from the representation table found relevant according to the query,
   - transmission of this information to a remote terminal by the means of a data transmission network,

and wherein the display of the result is done by the remote terminal.

9. Method for searching information according to any of the claims from 1 to 8, wherein, during the generation step of the stored document representation table, one performs a conversion so that any displayable character in a text type area in the stored document is encoded:
   - Either on one byte;
   - Or with the help of a tag inserted in the representation table and followed by a code on one byte.

10. Method for searching information according to any of the claims from 1 to 9, wherein, during the generation step of the representation table, one inserts in the character string of the representation table at least one set of data delimited by at least one tag to supplement the information included in this character string.

11. Method for searching information according to claim 10, wherein each tag inserted in the character strings includes at least one escape character encoded on one byte not in the printable characters of the first 128 positions of the ASCII encoding table.

12. Method for searching information according to claim 10 or 11, wherein the set of data contains data to help in the presentation of the preview, used during the result extraction step.

13. Method for searching information according to any of the claims from 10 to 12, wherein the set of data contains data to help the selection of at least one document.

14. Method for searching information according to any of the claims from 10 à 13, wherein one inserts in the character string of the representation table at

least one area of information of numerical type encoded on a predetermined number of bytes delimited by at least one tag indicative of this numerical area.

15. Method for searching information according to claim 14, wherein the tag indicating the numerical area is also a tag indicating a presentation convention of this numerical area.

16. Method for searching information according to any of the claims from 10 to 15, wherein, the stored documents being distributed in different types of document, one defines for each type of document a set of tags destined to be inserted in the character string of the representation table, each tag of this set having a meaning specific to this type of document.

17. Method for searching information according to any of the claims from 10 to 16, wherein one inserts in the character string of the representation table at least one set of data expressed in phonetic writing delimited by at least a tag of indication of phonetic writing.

18. Method for searching information according to any of the claims from 10 to 17, wherein one inserts in the character string of the representation table at least one tag indicating that a predetermined number of characters following that tag in the character string should not be scanned during the selection step.

19. Method for searching information according to any of the claims from 10 to 18, wherein one inserts in the character string of the representation table at least one set of data corresponding to a grammatical analysis of part of the contents of at least one stored document, delimited by at least one tag of indication of grammatical analysis.

20. Method for searching information according to any of the claims from 10 to 19, wherein one inserts in the character string of the representation table at least one set of data corresponding to metadata describing a part of the contents of at least one stored document, delimited by at least one tag of indication of metadata.

21. Method for searching information according to any of the claims from 10 to 20, wherein one inserts in the character string of the representation table at least one tag to start a predetermined program.

22. Method for searching information according to any of the claims from 1 to 21, wherein:

– Each stored document containing information distributed in several distinct predetermined sections common to all stored documents, the result is displayed in the form of a preview including a preview zone for each distinct common section and comprising a list of initially selected documents for the information they contain found relevant according to the query.

– Each preview zone may be disabled, and

– When one disables at least one preview zone, one maintains only in the displayed list each document initially selected for information found relevant that this document contains in at least one section corresponding to at last one zone that remains enabled.

23. Search engine for searching for information in documents stored in electronic memory, including:

– Means of generation of a stored document representation table, this table containing a character string comprising at least a part of the stored document information.

– Means of selection of at least one document among the stored documents, from a query containing at least one predetermined character string.

wherin it comprises means of extraction of a result with the help of the representation table, from information contained in the character string of the representation table found relevant according to the query, in order to display this result in the form of a preview of information relative to the selected document.

24. Microprocessor including instructions programmed for the implementation of a method for searching information according to any of the claims from 1 to 22.

25. Microprocessor according to claim 24, also including means of storage of at least one dictionary table containing a set of words in a predetermined language, each word being associated in this dictionary table to grammatical analysis data